

April 30, 2002

To: Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: David E. Janssen
Chief Administrative Officer

DAILY NEWS ARTICLE - PROBATION OFFICERS THREATEN JOB ACTION

At the March 26, 2002 Board meeting, on motion by Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, this office was instructed to review the March 23, 2002 Los Angeles Daily News article related to Deputy Probation Officers (DPOs) threatening a job action, and to report back to the Board on the facts. The article cited that DPOs assigned to the Mobile Anti-Gang Unit (Unit) claimed their lives are at-risk due to the County not providing proper equipment to perform their jobs safely. In addition, DPOs claim the Unit is inadequately staffed.

Based on our review of the article and discussions with the Department, attached is our response related to the DPOs and DPO Union issues referenced in the article. Additionally, the following provides a summary of the response to the key points cited.

Response to Key Points Cited in Article

- Although not provided with new vehicles, all DPOs in the Unit now have access to cars.
- Cell phones, pagers, pepper spray, flashlights, and bulletproof vests have also been provided or made available to the Unit's DPOs.
- Various measures have occurred to increase DPOs' safety, including the provision of 32 hours of safety training prior to the restructuring of the program. Overall, DPOs' safety does not appear to be compromised as a result of restructuring the anti-gang unit.
- There is no indication of mispending Schiff-Cardenas Crime Prevention Act of 2000 funds.

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In addition, the article stated that the Union President and the Chief Probation Officer planned to meet; however, the Chief Probation Officer was not aware of the intended meeting until subsequent to the printing of the article. Although the Union President has not yet approached the Chief Probation Officer, the Department has attempted to schedule meetings with the Union President to discuss safety and budget issues.

Overall, the Department will ensure that its employees are equipped with the necessary items to provide safety measures as possible.

Please let me know if you have any questions or if additional information is needed.

DEJ:DL
WW:AL:ljp

c: Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
County Counsel
Chief Probation Officer

daily news.bm

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE'S REVIEW
OF DAILY NEWS ARTICLE: PROBATION OFFICERS THREATEN JOB ACTION

DPOs' Issue: Los Angeles County fails to provide cars, cell phones, pagers, pepper spray, flashlights, and bulletproof vests to DPOs in the unit.

CAO's Response: The article referenced that the Department is negotiating to purchase \$100,000 worth of cars for the members of the unit; although not provided with new vehicles, all of the 23 DPOs now have access to cars. Prior to the restructuring of the program, DPOs were utilizing a combination of transportation -- they used personal vehicles (claimed reimbursement as mileage permittees), and County vehicles based on availability. As part of restructuring the Mobile Anti-Gang Unit, the Department added the use of County cars as a program incentive, and has successfully negotiated the purchase of vehicles from the California Highway Patrol.

Cell phones, pagers, pepper spray, flashlights, and bulletproof vests have also been provided or made available to the Unit's 23 DPOs.

Union's Issue: DPOs' lives are in jeopardy if they are not properly equipped and trained to do the job. If the County does not respond immediately, it will seek a court order to allow DPOs to get off the streets for their own protection.

CAO's Response: As indicated above, equipment items have been provided or have been made available to the Unit's DPOs. In addition, prior to restructuring the anti-gang unit, 32 hours of safety training had been provided, as necessary, to the DPOs. Also, whereas under the former anti-gang program, DPOs were individually assigned to monitor gang members, under the restructured program, they are accompanied by another DPO. Newly developed Memoranda of Understanding agreements also enable DPOs to work closely with Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) or Sheriff's Department (LASD) units, as necessary, thereby enhancing safety.

We are not aware of any court order sought by the Union.

Union's Issue: DPOs are upset about the restructuring of the anti-gang program. The former system allowed probation officers to monitor fewer gang members, keep in better contact with them and develop more intelligence about their activities. The new system has been replaced by mobile units that roam large areas, handle more gang members, and are not able to develop the intelligence needed to catch gang members violating their probation.

CAO's Response: Concurrent with increasing DPOs safety, working directly with LAPD and LASD units also increases an opportunity and ability to exchange and respond to intelligence information. The Unit's visibility is enhanced as the Unit is now required to provide supervision and monitoring of gang activity during critical after-school and weekend hours, whereas previously, the Unit was active only during the week.

In addition, there is no apparent perception of DPOs becoming more at-risk, since there have been no changes to the offender population or geographic areas of supervision. Based on this, we do not perceive DPOs' safety to be compromised as a result of restructuring the unit.

DPOs' Issue: There has been a reduction in the overall number of officers who are anti-gang specialists.

CAO's Response: A reduction in positions assigned to the unit has not occurred. There were 49 DPOs budgeted positions assigned to the former program; there are now 59. Of the 49 DPOs assigned to the former program, 33 remain under the restructured program. There are 29 DPO positions specifically assigned to the Mobile Anti-Gang Unit, of which 23 positions are filled. Although efforts are underway to fill vacancies, the process required to fill DPO positions is contingent on contractual provisions contained in the DPO (Local 685) Memorandum of Understanding, which at times, can be extensive.

The 29 Mobile Anti-Gang Unit positions are assigned to the following areas: East Los Angeles (5); Centinela (2); Crenshaw (4); Firestone (2); Foothill (2); Long Beach (4); San Gabriel Valley (2); South Central (4); and Van Nuys/East San Fernando Valley (4).

DPOs' Issue: The caseload that each manager is responsible for is too large and mobile officers are being required to make too many contacts.

CAO's Response: Previously, the caseload was 1:50, whereas the caseload under the restructured program is now 1:75. Although caseload has increased by 50 percent, under the former program the DPOs were working in the field and preparing court reports in the office. Under the restructured program, the DPOs are no longer required to prepare court reports, which enabled a caseload increase. Consequently, the DPOs are in the field 100 percent of the time, while case managers prepare court reports.

Increased in-person juvenile case contacts from one to three per month allows for more proactive and intensive supervision.

Union's Issue: The Chief Probation Officer is mispending the \$34 million from the Schiff-Cardenas Crime Prevention Act of 2000, and dismantled the former anti-gang program for the new model purely to shift costs away from the County and to the State. (As stated in the article, the Chief Probation Officer indicated that there are DPOs at more than 130 schools in the County, with preliminary data indicating that school-based probation supervision efforts have resulted in improved attendance and grades, and decreased misconduct. The Union President indicated that the problem is gang members who do not attend school.)

CAO's Response: The DPOs assigned to the unit are funded by County general funds; thus Schiff-Cardenas Crime Prevention Act of 2000 funds have not been appropriated or are being used to fund this unit.

The School-Based Probation Supervision Program, one of 16 programs, as funded by Schiff-Cardenas Crime Prevention Act of 2000 funds, currently has 65 DPOs assigned to 63 high schools and two elementary schools. (This represents only the Schiff-Cardenas-funded component of the entire School-Based Probation Supervision Program, which has DPOs at more than 130 schools, and are partially funded by other sources, i.e., California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids and County general funds.)

The Schiff-Cardenas Crime Prevention Act of 2000 requires the evaluation of all programs. SB 823 (Poochigian), chaptered on April 6, 2002, requires counties to submit an annual report on the programs funded by the Act and program outcomes to their county board of supervisors and the State Board of Corrections, beginning October 15, 2002.

The Probation Department continues to seek ways to combat gang activity by utilizing resources in the most efficient manner possible. As such, a comprehensive report based on a model that integrates overall evaluation processes with routine program monitoring, and aimed to determine program effectiveness at countywide and community levels, is also anticipated to be completed by the Department, in collaboration with the RAND Corporation in October 2002.